

Message Text

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16

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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SUBJECT: VISIT OF PROMINENT AMERICANS AND CANADIANS

1. SUMMARY: VISIT OF PROMINENT AMERICAN AND CANADIANS

DEC 15 TO 21 APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN GENERALLY SUCCESSFUL. GROUP RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA AND OTHER HIGH GOT OFFICIALS. END SUMMARY.

2. ON OCCASION OF ARRIVAL DEC 15 OF NEWEST BOEING

PURCHASED BY TUNIS AIR, GOT INVITED TO TUNIS FOR WEEK'S VISIT PROMINENT AMERICANS AND CANADIANS (INCLUDING SOME MEMBERS OF TUNISIAN FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION).

ON AMERICAN SIDE MOST IMPORTANT GUESTS INCLUDED PRESIDENT OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL JAMES GRANT, OPIC DIRECTOR DONLY BRADY, SENIOR EDITORS OF READERS DIGEST AND TIME, SEVERAL CONGRESSIONAL AIDES, AND A VARIED COLLECTION OF BUSINESSMEN, ACADEMICS, AND FRIENDS OF TUNISIA LIKE FORMER AMBASSADOR FRANIS RUSSELL. THE CANDADIAN GROUP INCLUDED ONE MINISTER AND ONE PARLIAMENTATRY DEPUTY AND A SIMILIAR POTPOURRI OF BUSINESSMEN AND OTHERS.

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3. PURPOSE OF VISIT AS EXPRESSED BY BOURGUIBA, JR., PRESIDENT OF TUNISIAN AMERICAN-FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION, WAS TO ENABLE GUESTS TO GET TO KNOW TUNISIA AND TO APPRECIATE THAT "TUNISIAN IS NOT ONLY AFRICAN COUNTRY, BUT ALSO MEDITERRANEAN AND ARAB COUNTRY WITH PROMISING ECONOMIC AND INVESTMENT FUTURE AHEAD OF IT.

4. GROUP WAS GIVEN RECEPTION BY PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA DEC 17. AND RECEIVED AS WELL BY OTHER HIGH LEVEL TUNISIAN OFFICIALS, INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA AND MINISTER OF NATIONAL ECONOMY AYARI. GOT ORGANIZED VARIOUS TOURS AROUND COUNTRY, INCLUDING DJERBA AND MONASTIR. ONE OF HIGHLIGHTS OF TRIP FROM GUESTS' POINT OF VIEW WAS HOME VISITS WITH TUNISIANS AS ALL WERE INVITED AT LEAST ONCE TO HOME OF TUNISIAN FAMILY. GUESTS' ONLY REAL COMPLAINT WAS SOME DISORGANIZATION ON PART OF TUNISIANS BUT THEY APPRECIATED THAT THIS FAIRLY NORMAL FOR THIS PART OF WORLD.

5. DURING HIS REMARKS TO GROUP PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA REITERATED THAT HE WILL BE VISITING US IN MAY AND MENTIONED HE MIGHT ALSO BE GOING TO CANADA AT THE SAME TIME. IN ADDITION, HE MADE GENERAL WELCOMING REMARKS AND INVITED VISITORS TO EXPLORE INTERIOR OF COUNTRY WHERE THEY WOULD SEE FRUITS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN TUNISIA, US AND CANADA.

6. PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANT WERE REMARKS OF MIN NATIONAL ECONOMY AYARI, WHO, DURING IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION WITH FOUR JOURNALISTS AND JOHN NUGENT, STAFF MEMBER, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RESEARCH COMMITTEE TASK FORCE ON ENERGY AND RESOURCES, SPENT HALF OF TIME ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT OIL. IN RESPONSE TO DIRECT QUESTION AS TO WHETHER OR NOT TUNISIA TAKING PART IN ARAB OIL PRODUCTION CUTBACK AND BOYCOTT OF OIL SALES TO US AND HOLLAND, AYARI REPORTEDLY SAID "NO, WE CAN'T AFFORD TO." DURING EARLIER MEETING WITH WHOLE GROUP AYARI DISCUSSED GENERAL ECONOMIC SITUATION OF COUNTRY AND LIBERALIZED FOREIGN INVESTMENT LAW. HE EXPLAINED ADVANTAGES TO BE GAINED BY INVESTING HERE AND ENCOURAGED COMPANIES REPRESENTED TO DO SO. AMONG VISITORS WERE SEVERAL BUSINESSMEN, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHO HAD FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHER OFFICIALS OR MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR FUTURE CONTACTS.

7. COMMENT: WHILE VERY LITTLE CONCRETE RESULTED FROM EXCURSION, IN GENERAL IT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL. VISIT NO DOUBT MADE MORE FRIENDS FOR TUNISIA, AND IT MAY HAVE OPENED UP SOME POSSIBILITIES FOR INVESTMENT. ALTHOUGH OVERALL CALIBER OF AMERICAN DELEGATION WAS NOT QUITE ON

PAR WITH CANADIAN GROUP, SPONSORS ONLY HAD A COUPLE OF
WEEKS TO WORK WITH AND MOST OF AMERICANS FIRST APPROACHED
WERE UNABLE TO ADJUST PLANS ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE. WE
HAVE LEARNED THAT TUNISIANS HAVE DECIDED TO COMBINE
THEIR FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION INTO ONE TUNISIAN-
NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION WITH SEPARATE ASSOCIATIONS
REMAINING IN US AND CANADA RESPECTIVELY.
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